September 26, 2008

2008-09 Budget Highlights

The 2008-09 State Budget has been enacted and includes the following adjustments to the Commission's programs:

- Reduces the number of Assumption of Loans for Education (APLE) warrants from 8,000 to 7,200 maintaining the 10 percent reduction that was effected during the 2007-08 budget year. The two State Nursing Assumption Programs of Loans for Education—Nursing Faculty and Nurses in State Facilities—were authorized to enter into 100 new agreements each for 2008-09;

- Maintains the Competitive Cal Grant program at current levels, a relief to prospective recipients after the Governor's January proposal to eliminate all new Competitive awards;

- Continues support of the maximum Cal Grant award amounts of $9,708 for students attending private institutions, while maximum awards at UCs and CSUs reflect fee increases of 7.4 percent and 10 percent respectively. Access amounts remain at $1,551;

- Funds Cal-SOAP at $7.35 million through the Federal Challenge Grant, representing a savings to the State's General Fund and an increase of almost $1 million over last year's funding level. One million dollars of the funding is identified for Career Technical Education (CTE) awareness, a priority of the Governor as represented in his CTE Initiative launched in 2005;

- Funds the Cash for College (CFC) program for $330,000 from the federal College Access Challenge Grant. CFC was funded at $662,000 in 2007-08;

- Extends the deadline for the sale of EdFund to January 10, 2011, and reduces funding for the Federal Policy and Programs Division (FPPD) from $1 million to $500,000 for the on-going oversight of the federal loan program; and

- Reduces the Commission's workload budget by $1.5 million.

Commission staff will present its analysis of the impact of the final State Budget at the Commission's next meeting, likely to be scheduled for October.

Cal Grant and Chafee Payment Processing

This year the Commission activated Cal Grant payment reporting before the budget was signed to minimize the burden of the late budget on financial aid staff.

With the signing of the 2008-09 State Budget, staff began processing fall term payments for both the Cal Grant and Chafee Grant Programs that were on hold due to the late budget. The Cal Grant electronic funds are being transferred and we anticipate those funds being available to the campus by next week. Paper checks for the Chafee Grant Program are expected to be available to campuses within 4-6 weeks.

WebGrants Reporting Capabilities

WebGrants may be used to upload program change requests, school changes and high school graduation confirmations.

Each year, a number of new Cal Grant applicants will meet eligibility criteria for both Cal Grant A and B awards. When awarding Cal Grants, the Commission places the eligible student into the program that appears to provide the greatest monetary benefit for the student. A report of students identified with eligibility in both Cal Grant A and B programs is available on the WebGrants report download screen. Prior to the reporting of Cal Grant payments for the year, institutions may switch the student's program. The Commission will process change requests weekly.

Students also have the ability to request a program change using either the new Cal Grant Recipient Change Form (SAG16a) provided with the student's California Aid Report and award package or Grant Record Change Form for Students (G-10) which is available on the Commission's Web site.

Award Status Extract

Institutions may identify students receiving a Cal Grant award by uploading a list of their students on the WebGrants File Upload screen. The Commission will release an "Award Status Extract" report that lists whether a student has received a Cal Grant. The award report can be used by schools to create a school change request. This process will ensure all students attending the institution with a Cal Grant award are reflected on the institution's Grant Roster. For more information on this process, please refer to the "Data Transfer WebGrants User Guide" available on WebGrants Help screen.

High School Graduation Confirmation

Confirmation of a student's high school graduation, or its equivalent, is required prior to the release of any funding for a new Entitlement Cal Grant. Institutions may submit batch submissions of graduation confirmations using WebGrants.

Students may confirm their high school graduation status on WebGrants for Students (WGS) or by submitting the new 2008-09 California High School Graduation Confirmation Certification Form (G-8). The Commission encourages students to use WGS. E-mail notices have been sent to unconfirmed Entitlement participants. Postcard reminders will be mailed in October. For additional information, please contact Tae Kang at 916.464.2954 or tkang@csac.ca.gov.

Assumption Program of Loans for Education Update

The priority deadline for 2008-09 APLE applications is November 1, 2008. If all allocations are not met by the priority deadline, the Commission will continue to accept eligible applications until all allocations are disbursed or June 30, 2009—whichever comes first. If you have questions regarding the APLE application process, please call 888.224.7268, option 3.

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

2008 California High School Counselor Workshops

For more than a decade, the Commission and its auxiliary EdFund and the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators have partnered to provide regional workshops on financial aid information and training to thousands of high school counselors.

Eighteen workshops have been developed by a large coalition of partners to provide high school counselors with information in the following areas:

- Federal program and application changes;
- Cash for College and AB 540 tuition assistance;
- Cal Grant program;
- Overview of financial aid programs;
- FAFSA line-by-line review;
- Loans 101 and the life cycle of a loan; and
- Non-need based aid options.

To find out more information about the workshops, their logistics and how to register, visit High School Counselor Workshops . The table below provides a list of upcoming workshop locations and dates.

High School Counselor Workshops

Bakersfield	Oct 31
Fresno	Oct 30
Fullerton	Nov 12
Hayward	Oct 23
La Jolla	Nov 14
Los Angeles	Oct 13, Oct 14
Norwalk	Nov 7
Palo Alto (Stanford)	Oct 29
Redding	Oct 22
Rocklin	Oct 21
Sacramento	Oct 27, Oct 28
San Bernardino	Nov 13
Santa Barbara	Nov 6
Santa Maria	Nov 4
Thousand Oaks	Nov 5
Vallejo	Oct 20
Woodland Hills	Oct 16

The Commission remains dedicated to keeping you apprised of any new information that may affect our programs. Please forward your ideas and comments to Fastblast@csac.ca.gov